

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SIL-01 LAB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7646

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ELRB, IT

SUBJECT: PAA/TWA STRIKE

REF: ROME 14609

1. OCTOBER 22 AND 23 CALM AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT. LOCAL
PAA AND TWA REPS REPORT NO RPT NO DISTURBANCES.

2. UNIONS HELD PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 22 TO ANNOUNCE SIX HOUR
GENERAL CIVIL AVIATION STRIKE NEXT WEEK, WHICH IS TO AFFECT ALL RPT
ALL CIVIL AVIATION OPERATIONS IN ITALY, TO SUPPORT PAA/TWA/ALITALIA
EMPLOYEES' DEMANDS FOR NO RPT NO REDUCTIONS IN FORCE. TIME OF
STRIKE WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER.

3. SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS STATE CIVAIR EMPLOYEES UNIONS WILL ORGANIZE
BOYCOTT OF PAA/TWA, BUT NOT RPT NOT ALITALIA, WHICH MAY BE EXTENDED
TO "BLOCKING ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF PAA/TWA FLIGHTS." LABOR
ATTACHE'S OFFICE CHECKING WITH UNIONS TO DETERMINE ACCURACY THESE
REPORTS, WHICH ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO LOCAL PAA AND TWA REPS.

4. IT ALSO REPORTED THAT SOME LABOR LEADERS WANT GOI TO INTERVENE
IN PAA/TWA LABOR DISPUTES TO ASSURE SETTLEMENT FAVORABLE TO UNIONS.
LEVERAGE TO BE USED BY GOI WOULD BE THREAT OF "COMPLETE REVIEW" OF
US-ITALY BILATERAL AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT.

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5. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT AT ONE POINT DURING OCTOBER 21 DISTURBANCES AT FIUMICINO, AS MANY AS 800-1000 PERSONS (MOSTLY THOSE WHO HAD WALKED OFF OTHER JOBS) WERE PACKED IN RELATIVELY SMALL SPACE IN FRONT OF PAA/TWA COUNTERS FOR SHORT TIME. DURING CRUSH, TOMATOES WERE THROWN AT TWA STAFF BEHIND COUNTERS. ONE FEMALE US CITIZEN TWA PASSENGER WAS HIT WITH, BUT NOT INJURED BY, THROWN TOMATOES.

6. COMMENT: ANOTHER TACTIC WHICH MAY BE USED BY CIVAIR EMPLOYEES IN THIS DISPUTE IS "WORK TO RULE." FORTUNATELY, ITALIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL IS OPERATED BY ITALIAN AIR FORCE AND NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE.

7. NATIONWIDE GENERAL CIVAIR STRIKE AND THREATENED BOYCOTT US FLAG CARRIERS APPEAR UNNECESSARILY SEVERE ACTIONS GIVEN FACT ONLY MAXIMUM 115 PAA/TWA EMPLOYEES MAY BE AFFECTED. (TO DATE, ALL 85 AFFECTED TWA EMPLOYEES HAVE REFUSED OFFERS OF ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT.) EMBASSY UNFORTUNATELY DETECTS HINT OF ANTI-AMERICANISM UNDERLYING PRESENT DISPUTE. BOTH PAA AND TWA HAVE SCRUPULOUSLY COMPLIED WITH ALL PROVISIONS OF ITALIAN LABOR LAW. IN CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, HOWEVER, UNIONS REFUSE ACCEPT REDUCTIONS IN FORCE FOR ANY REASON. VOLPE

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